

>> forwarding it on, that's not getting any follow up," Brock said. "That's not getting discovered. Again, it's the isolated incident versus looking at the whole picture."

Richmond's DV team is the product of an Office of Violence Against Women grant, which employs a full-time advocate housed within the police department as well as an officer whose sole assignment is to work domestic violence cases. Having the team in place gives the agency a chance to look at that history, gather additional facts and turn DV calls into investigations instead of simply filling out paperwork and letting the court handle it, Brock said.

"So many times when you are dealing with domestic violence it is viewed as a sequestered, isolated event," he said. "It's rarely that. Oftentimes a little follow-up investigation would flesh that out. Our officers working road shifts don't always have the time to do that. It's, 'do the report, get the people the up-front service they need and move on.' With somebody dedicated to following up on these cases, they can establish that history."

The department's advocate, Suzanne Howell, agreed that changing the conversation about DV from incidental to historical is necessary to pursue a higher level of service to victims.

"If you change the way you look at it and change the way you approach it, I think it's going to not only give better victim service and higher offender accountability,

but also reduce police burnout," she said. "This is one of the things that burns them out the fastest. I think if they are able to change the way they are looking at [domestic violence] they will change the way they see their job. That's our goal."

Changing that line of thinking is all part of the education process, said Richmond Police Special Victims Investigator Stuart Adams, the officer assigned to the agency's DV cases. Adams served the Kentucky State Police for 22 years and worked many, many DV cases during his career, he said.

"Being in law enforcement for so many years, it's always the same old ones," Adams said of DV calls. "It's the same people doing it. But there's a reason it's the same ones. There's a reason that things keep happening. I look back and think, 'Oh my goodness, I can't believe I [worked that case that way].' And I know those things are still going on. We're just trying to help educate. Lord knows I don't know why I'm the one who's going to be doing it, because I'm as guilty as anybody. But we have to open all of our eyes that this is a major, major problem."

Wynn argues that domestic violence offenders are the most "controlling and

manipulative criminal personality." Many people think of domestic violence only as physical abuse, but it can include many other types of violence, such as verbal abuse and isolation. Abuse that occurs within families also takes on a different dynamic than any other kind of assault or threat. There are feelings involved and lives that are intertwined. And, in most cases, the involved parties are adults who can choose whether or not to press charges, show up for court, follow through with emergency protective orders or let the offenders come back over and over again.

"It can get frustrating with domestic violence cases, just because they are adults, and they get to make choices," said Bowling Green Police Advocate April Fulcher. "I had a lady call not too long ago and say her mother was just in a very bad situation. She said, 'I don't know where to turn next because she keeps refusing every service that's offered to her. I don't want to plan her funeral and I'm scared she's going to die.' Arming them with information sometimes, even if it is the third, fourth or



▲ Richmond Police Special Victims Investigator Stuart Adams spent 22 years working for the Kentucky State Police, and now is using the career lessons he learned to lend an experienced hand to Richmond's domestic violence team.



▲ Victims' Advocate Suzanne Howell said working together with a dedicated officer to serve domestic violence victims is a dream come true. Howell also serves as the assistant director of Madison County's Hope's Wings domestic violence shelter.



▲ Bowling Green Police Advocate April Fulcher is one of several in Warren County who worked diligently to combine the efforts of BGPD and the Barren River Area Safe Space domestic violence shelter's advocates to better serve victims in Bowling Green.